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SUBJECT: CYPRUS: 2007-2008 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL STRATEGY
REPORT (INCSR) PART I, DRUGS AND CHEMICAL CONTROL

REF: STATE 155088

¶1. Per Reftel request, Post submits in para 2 below Part I (Drugs and Chemical Control) of the 2006-2007 INCSR. The report is based on an update of last year's published version.

¶2. BEGIN TEXT

Cyprus

¶I. Summary

Cyprus has been divided since the Turkish military intervention of 1974, following a coup d'etat directed from Greece. Since then, the southern part of the country has been under the control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. The northern part is controlled by a Turkish Cypriot administration that in 1983 proclaimed itself the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)," recognized only by Turkey. The U.S. Government recognizes only the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and does not recognize the "TRNC." This report refers to the Government-controlled area unless otherwise specified.

Although Cypriots do not produce or consume significant amounts of narcotics, an increase in local drug use continues to be a concern. The Government of Cyprus traditionally has had a low tolerance toward any use of narcotics by Cypriots and continues to employ a public affairs campaign to remind Cypriots that narcotics use carries heavy costs, and users risk stiff criminal penalties. Cyprus' geographic location and its decision to opt for free ports at its two main seaports continue to make it an ideal transit country for legitimate trade in most goods, including chemicals, between the Middle East and Europe. To a limited extent, drug traffickers use Cyprus as a trans-shipment point due to its strategic location and its relatively sophisticated business and communications infrastructure. Cyprus monitors the import and export of dual-use precursor chemicals for local markets. Cyprus customs authorities have implemented changes to their inspection procedures, including computerized profiling and expanded use of technical screening devices to deter those who would attempt to use Cyprus free ports for narcotics smuggling. A party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, Cyprus strictly enforces tough counternarcotics laws, and its police and customs authorities maintain excellent relations with their counterparts in the U.S. and other governments.

II. Status of Country

Cypriots themselves do not produce or consume significant quantities of drugs. The island's strategic location in the eastern Mediterranean creates an unavoidable liability for Cyprus, as Cyprus is a convenient stopover for narcotics traffickers moving from Southwest Asia to Europe. Precursor chemicals are believed to transit Cyprus in limited quantities, although there is no hard evidence that they are diverted for illegal use. Cyprus offers relatively highly developed business and tourism facilities, a modern telecommunications system, and the ninth-largest merchant shipping fleet in the world.

This year has seen approximately 2.3 million dollars worth of illegal narcotics proceeds frozen in several bank accounts. Drug-related crime, still low by international standards, has been steadily rising since the 1980's. According to the Justice Ministry, drug related arrests and convictions in Cyprus have doubled since 1998. Cypriot law carries a maximum prison term of two years for drug users less than 25 years of age with no prior police record. In late 2005, the Courts began to refer most first-time offenders to rehabilitation centers rather than requiring incarceration. This still continues. Sentences for drug traffickers range from four years to life, depending on the substances involved and the offender's criminal record.

In an effort to reduce recidivism as well as to act as a deterrent for would-be offenders, Cypriot courts have begun sentencing distributors to near maximum prison terms as allowed by law. For example, in the second half of 2004, the Cypriot Courts began sentencing individuals charged with distributing heroin and ecstasy (MDMA) with much harsher sentences, ranging from 8 to 15 years. Cypriot law allows for the confiscation of drug-related assets as well as the freezing of profits, and a special investigation of a suspect's financial records.

Cyprus's small population of soft-core drug users continues to grow. Cannabis is the most commonly used drug, followed by heroin, cocaine, and MDMA (Ecstasy), which are available in major towns. Reports of narcotic-related overdoses in 2007 were as follows: sixteen confirmed drug related deaths. Of the deaths, eight were the results of an overdose; eight deaths were indirectly related to drugs. The number of overdose/drug-related deaths increased by six as compared to 2006. The use of cannabis and ecstasy by young Cypriots and tourists continues to increase. The Government of Cyprus has traditionally adopted a low tolerance toward any use of narcotics by Cypriots and uses a pro-active public relations strategy to remind Cypriots that narcotics use carries heavy penalties. The media reports extensively whenever narcotics arrests are made. The Republic of Cyprus has no working relations with enforcement authorities in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots. The U.S. Embassy in Nicosia, particularly the DEA, within the Embassy, nevertheless works with the Turkish Cypriot community on international narcotics-related issues. Turkish Cypriots have their own law enforcement organization responsible for the investigation of all narcotics-related matters. They have shown a willingness to pursue narcotics traffickers and to provide assistance when asked by foreign law enforcement authorities.

III. Country Actions Against Drugs in 2007

Policy Initiatives.

In May 2004, Cyprus became a member of the European Union (EU). Prior to its accession into the EU, Cyprus implemented all the necessary requirements to comply with EU regulations. To meet EU regulations, Cyprus established the Anti-Drug Council, which is responsible for national drug strategies and programs. The council is chaired by the Health Minister and is composed of heads of key agencies with an active role in the fight against drugs. They are appointed by the Council of Ministers for a period of three years. As the national coordinating mechanism on drug issues in the country, the Council's mandate includes the planning, coordination and evaluation of all actions and programs and interventions aimed at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of drug prevention. The Council acts as a liaison between the Republic of Cyprus and other foreign organizations concerning drug related issues, as well as having the responsibility for promoting legislative or any other measures in an attempt to effectively counter the use and

dissemination of drugs. Moreover, the Cyprus Anti-Drug Council is the responsible body for the strategic development and implementation of the National Drugs Strategy and the National Action Plan on Drugs aligned with the EU Drugs Strategy.

In connection with EU entry, Cypriot authorities also established the Cyprus Police European Union and International Police Co-operation Directorate, which replaces a similar operational unit established in 2002. The Division is responsible for cooperating with foreign liaison officers appointed to Cyprus, including the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Nicosia Country Office (NCO), as well as Cypriot liaison officers appointed abroad. The Cyprus Police European Union and International Police Co-operation Directorate assisted in the extradition of two individuals to the United States arrested on narcotics charges.

The Cyprus Police, Drug Law Enforcement Unit, (DLEU) is the lead police agency in Cyprus charged with combating drug trafficking in Cyprus. The DLEU hosts weekly meetings attended by foreign liaison officers from the United States (DEA), Greece, United Kingdom, Russia, France and Sovereign Base Areas assigned to Cyprus and regional liaison officers not assigned in Cyprus from Australia, Canada, Germany, and Italy with reporting responsibilities for Cyprus. In 2007, DLEU's budget increased slightly which contributed to the continuation of training its members in combating drug trafficking. The appointment of a new DLEU commander in 2006 has significantly resulted in the increase of morale, arrest and seizure statistics. The energetic enthusiasm of the new commander has radiated throughout the entire DLEU.

In late October 2006, the DEA Office of International Training conducted an Asset Forfeiture Training conference in Nicosia, which was attended by more than forty law enforcement personnel. In 2004, Cyprus established two new centers for the detoxification and rehabilitation of drug addicts. A new law enacted in Cyprus provides judges with the discretion to send convicted drug addicts to jail or to one of these centers under certain conditions.

Law Enforcement Efforts

Cyprus aggressively pursues drug seizures, arrests, and prosecutions for drug violations. Cyprus focuses on major traffickers when cases subject to their jurisdiction permit them to, and readily supports the international community in efforts against the narcotics trade. Cypriot police are generally effective in their law enforcement efforts, although their techniques and capacity remain restricted by a shortage of financial resources. Through the first eleven months of 2007, the Cyprus Police Drug Law Enforcement Unit opened 747 cases and made 761 arrests, an increase of 74 and 83 respectively from last year's statistics. Of those arrested 620 were Greek Cypriots and 241 were foreign nationals. DLEU seized approximately 126 kgs of cannabis, 394 cannabis plants, 229 grams of cannabis resin (hashish), 1.565 kgs of cocaine, 2,860 tablets MDMA (Ecstasy), .5 grams of amphetamines, 4.64 kgs of opium, and 664 grams of heroin, and 2 tablets of methadone.

Area administered by Turkish Cypriots: The Narcotics and Trafficking Prevention Bureau functions directly under the General Police Headquarters. From January to November 2007, the Turkish Cypriot authorities arrested 255 individuals for narcotics offenses and seized 15.895 kgs of hashish, 2.635 kgs of heroin, 59 grams of cocaine, 634 kgs of opium, 351 cannabis plants, 6332 tablets of ecstasy and 257 mgs of ecstasy powder. Overall, with the exception of ecstasy, the police report a decline in drug seizures.

Corruption

There is no evidence that senior or other officials facilitate the production, processing, or shipment of drugs, or the laundering of the proceeds of illegal drug transactions in either the Government-controlled area or the area administered by Turkish Cypriots.

Agreements and Treaties

Cyprus is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1972 Protocol amending the Single

Convention on Narcotic Drugs, and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Cyprus is a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols, and is a signatory to the UN Convention Against Corruption. An extradition treaty between the United States and Cyprus entered into force in September 1999. A mutual legal assistance treaty (MLAT) between the United States and Cyprus entered into force on September 18, 2002. Cyprus also became a member of the EU in May 2004.

Area administered by Turkish Cypriots: In 1990, a protocol regarding cooperation in the fields of security, trafficking of narcotics and psychotropic materials, battling terrorism, technical education and social relations was signed between the "TRNC" and the Republic of Turkey. The "TRNC" has no other agreements in this field as Turkey is the only country that recognizes it.

Cultivation/Production

Cannabis is the only illicit substance cultivated in Cyprus, and it is grown only in small quantities for local consumption. The Cypriot authorities vigorously pursue illegal cultivation. The police seized 394 cannabis plants in the first 11 months of 2007.

Area administered by Turkish Cypriots: The import/export, sale, distribution, possession or cultivation of narcotics is viewed as a serious offense and sentences of up to 15 to 20 years are not unusual. There have been no reports of large-scale cultivation of narcotics, although some individuals have planted cannabis for their own personal use. The police seized 351 cannabis plants during the first eleven months of 2007; however, claim that the seizures were not part of a large-scale cultivation organization.

Drug Flow/Transit:

Although no longer considered a significant transit point for drugs, there were several cases of narcotics smuggling in the past year. Cypriot law enforcement authorities continued to cooperate with the DEA office in Nicosia on several international investigations initiated during 2007. Tourism to Cyprus is sometimes accompanied by the import of narcotics, principally ecstasy and cannabis. Cyprus police believe that to a large extent their efforts in combating drug trafficking have converted Cyprus from a drug transit point to a "broker point," in which dealers meet potential buyers and negotiate the purchase and transport of future shipments. This

change is a result of improved conditions in Lebanon: Lebanese containerized freight now moves directly to third countries without transiting Cyprus. In the past, Cypriot authorities believed that there was no significant retail sale of narcotics occurring in Cyprus; however, with new statistics on arrests and seizures of narcotics, this theory has changed. Last year, arrests of Cypriots for possession of narcotics with intent to distribute were significantly higher than the number of arrests of non-Cypriots on similar charges. There is no production of precursor chemicals in Cyprus, nor is there any indication of illicit diversion. Dual-use precursor chemicals manufactured in Europe do transit Cyprus to third countries. The Cyprus Customs Service no longer has the responsibility of receiving manifests of transit goods through Cyprus. This responsibility now rests with the Cyprus Ports Authority. Goods entering the Cypriot free ports of Limassol and Larnaca can be legally re-exported using different transit documents, as long as there is no change in the description of the goods transported.

Area administered by Turkish Cypriots: The majority of hashish comes from Turkey, whereas heroin comes from Pakistan and Iran via Turkey. Ecstasy and cocaine come from Turkey and England. The preferred method of smuggling illegal narcotics is through concealed compartments of vehicles.

Domestic Programs (Demand Reduction)

Cyprus actively promotes demand-reduction programs through the school system and through social organizations. Drug abuse remains relatively rare in Cyprus. Marijuana is the most commonly encountered drug, followed by heroin, cocaine, and Ecstasy, all of which are available in most major towns. Users consist primarily of young people and tourists. Recent increases in drug use have

prompted the Government to promote demand-reduction programs actively through the school system and social organizations, with occasional participation from the DEA office in Nicosia. Drug treatment is available.

Area administered by Turkish Cypriots: The Turkish Cypriot community has introduced several demand reduction programs, including regular seminars for school counselors and teachers.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

Policy Initiatives. The U.S. Embassy in Cyprus, through the regional DEA office, works closely with the Cypriot police force to coordinate international narcotics investigations and evaluate local narcotics trends. Utilizing its own regional presence, DEA assists the new coordination unit in establishing strong working relationships with its counterparts in the region. DEA also works directly with Cypriot customs, in particular, on development and implementation of programs to ensure closer inspection and interdiction of transit containers.

The Road Ahead

The USG enjoys close cooperation with the Cypriot Office of the Attorney General, the Central Bank, the Cyprus Police, and the Customs Authority in drug enforcement and anti-money laundering efforts. In 2008, the USG will continue to work with the Government of Cyprus to strengthen enforcement of existing counternarcotics laws and enhance Cypriot participation in regional counternarcotics efforts. DEA regularly provides information and insight to the GOC on ways to strengthen counternarcotics efforts. New laws to empower members of the Drug Law Enforcement Unit in their fight against drug traffickers are currently before Parliament.

END TEXT

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